

In terms of land mass, Canada is the second largest country in the world. Perhaps because we are thinly populated, we are perceived by others as having an environment that is pristine. Yet, pollution is now found in our Arctic. 300,000 Canadian lakes are vulnerable to our most important environmental problem, acid rain, and 14,000 lakes have already been acidified. Acid rain from the United States is threatening our apple and maple trees, each producers of important agricultural earnings.

The breeding grounds of northern caribou are threatened by resource development. Beluga whales in the Gulf of St. Lawrence are endangered by the flow of pollutants, including toxic chemicals, from the St. Lawrence-Great Lakes river system. The food supply of the loon, one of the symbols of the Canadian wilderness, is affected by acid rain.

The protection of the environment is a top priority for the Government of Canada. For example, the Canadian Parliament in the coming months will be dealing with an environmental protection act which is to be one of the strongest in the western hemisphere. The Act will increase the power of the Federal Government to protect the environment, impose tough penalties on polluters and introduce life-cycle management of toxic chemicals. We have recently adopted a new water policy which recognizes the value of this essential resource and provides a framework to manage it in an environmentally sound manner.

We recognize the value of preserving significant wilderness areas in Canada. That is why we created a park last year in the magnificent archipelago off the west coast of British Columbia known as South Moresby. Often described as the Canadian Galapagos, it harbors species of flora and fauna unique in the world and it contains some of the last virgin rainforests on the North American continent.

The care for the protection of the environment extends to our foreign policy. We are devoting special attention to a proper follow-up of the Brundtland Report, not only in the UN but in all international organizations to which Canada belongs: the OECD, UNEP and others. We are particularly concerned about global climate change, and will be very active in developing a comprehensive multilateral treaty on a law of the atmosphere.

Canada is committed to increasing the share of its development assistance dedicated to environmental protection. Environmental concerns are now a priority for the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and we will